

AFTER three postponements in the last week, Wycombe Wanderers' long-awaited FA Trophy second round replay against Blyth Spartans should at last get under way at Loakes Park tomorrow (Saturday).

A steady thaw set in during the week to disperse the ten inches of snow that drifted to one side of the pitch after last week's Arctic weather. Barring another sudden freeze these top two non-league teams should be able to settle a tie that has become something of a long running saga.

Both teams will be keen to settle it this time and with two hours — including 30 minutes of extra time — at their disposal there should be a definite result.

With ground advantage and a large crowd behind them, Wycombe must start favourites but as manager Andy Williams pointed out last week Blyth produced some of their best performances away from home. There will certainly be no complacency in the home camp.

Although Bobby Davies is back in training again after a niggling knee injury he is unlikely to be brought back just yet. Mr Williams said, "It is asking a bit much to play him just now. I'll probably stick to the defence that did so well at Blyth."

This means that Steve Hardwick will play once again at right back while Paul Birdseye switches over to the left.

Report by MICHAEL KNOX

Together with experienced campaigners Alan Phillips and Keith Mead, they form a difficult nut to crack as Blyth's top marksman Terry Johnson found out two weeks ago in the 1-1 draw at Croft Park.

'Match of the Day' television fans will have seen a repeat of Johnson's goal against Wrexham on last Saturday's programme. It appeared in a section devoted to FA Cup upsets.

SOBBED

Blyth reached the last 16 last year only to lose to Wrexham after a memorable replay at Newcastle. Afterwards their coach Jackie Marks sobbed into the television cameras and said that it was only the second time in his life that he had cried.

The previous occasion came when Blyth lost in the semi-finals of the last Amateur Cup. Marks is now the manager of the Northern League side and his counterpart Andy Williams commented this week, "I hope he doesn't forget to bring his handkerchief with him."

Blyth are travelling down by coach overnight and will probably stay somewhere in Hertfordshire.

This will add to the already enormous bill that has built up over this long running tie. Here is the calendar of events since

the second round draw on Monday, January 15.

Friday, January 2 — Match scheduled for the following day is called off because of the state of the frozen pitch. Postponed until the next Wednesday.

Tuesday, January 6 — Wycombe get a phone call saying that the pitch has been passed fit by a Football League referee.

Wednesday, February 7 — Wycombe players travel up to Newcastle by plane while a few hardy supporters go up 300 miles by car. Just as they arrive at the ground, a notice has been put up on the gate announcing the match was off. Match referee thought pitch was still unplayable and called off the match, an hour before scheduled start. Wanderers spent nearly £1,000 and players took day off work — all in vain. Postponed until Saturday.

Friday, February 9 — Wycombe get phone call saying that the pitch has been passed fit by a Football League referee.

Saturday, February 10 — Players travel up by plane again, while officials and 250 supporters go up by train to support their team. With this help Blues draw 1-1 after taking first half lead.

Monday, February 12 — After prolonged discussions the FA

allow teams to replay at Loakes Park on the following Saturday.

Friday, February 16 — After heavy snow on pitch, match called off and switched to Monday.

Sunday, February 18 — One look at the pitch is enough to call match off. Now rearranged for Wednesday.

Monday, February 19 — Another inspection reveals that pitch will not be ready for Wednesday. Rearranged for Saturday.

The next date on Wycombe's calendar is next Tuesday when they entertain old rivals Slough Town in the semi-final of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup, brought forward from March 10 because of the possible fixture congestion at the end of the season.

BERGER ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	26	16	4	6	48	27	52
Dagenham	25	15	3	7	49	37	48
Slough	28	14	6	8	36	28	48
Hendon	30	13	9	8	40	34	48
Dulwich	25	13	8	4	46	23	47
Barking	22	12	7	3	50	32	43
Wycombe	27	12	7	8	39	26	43
Woking	24	12	6	6	49	32	42
Leatherhead	26	12	5	9	40	27	41
Boreham Wd	30	11	7	12	39	45	40
Croydon	25	11	6	8	34	28	39
Tooting	29	10	8	11	38	38	38
Walthamstow	29	11	5	13	45	47	38
Hitchin	29	10	8	11	40	47	38
Oxford C	29	11	5	13	38	51	38
Sutton	26	10	6	11	36	30	36
Tilbury	28	10	6	12	42	56	36
Hayes	29	6	11	12	31	42	29
Carshalton	27	5	10	12	32	49	25
Staines	27	4	11	12	29	44	23
Kingston	31	3	11	17	25	50	20
Leytonstone	25	2	3	20	17	52	9